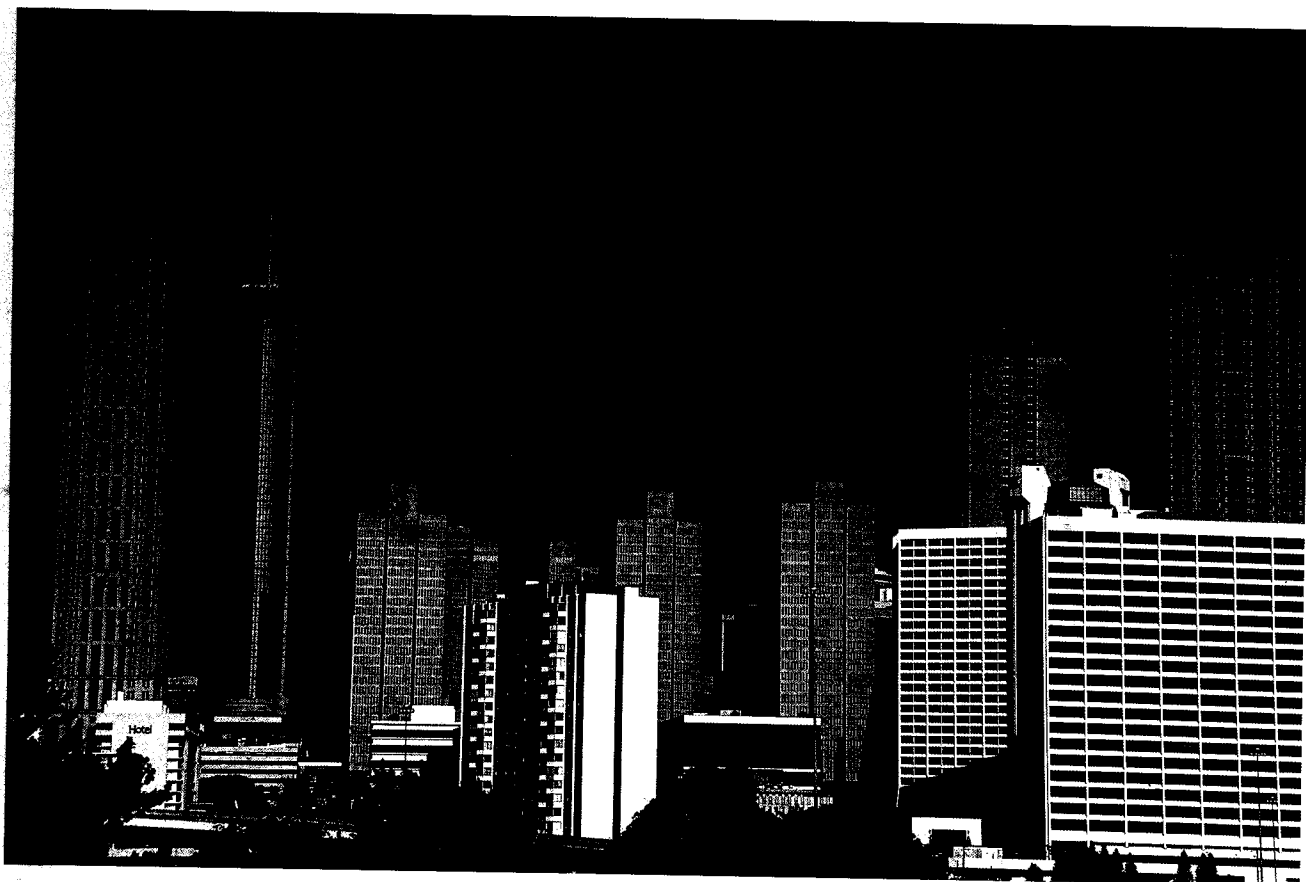


Atlanta Legal Aid Society



2006 Annual Report



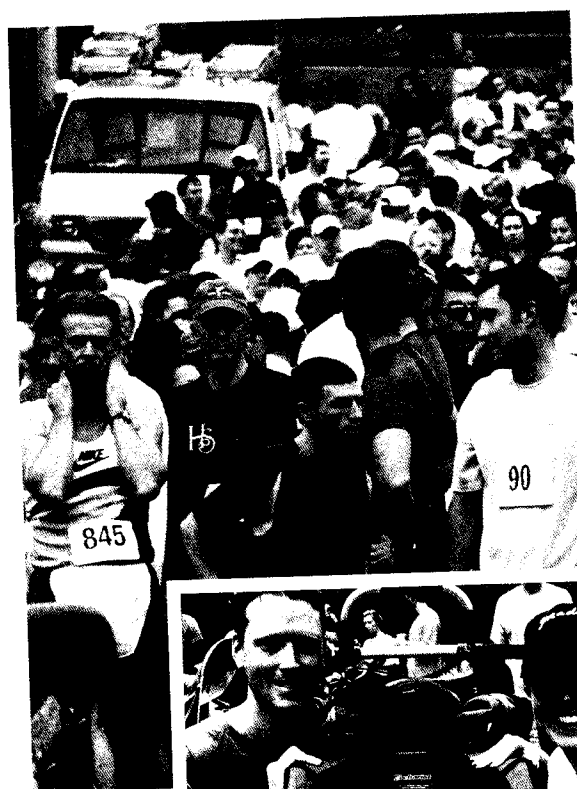
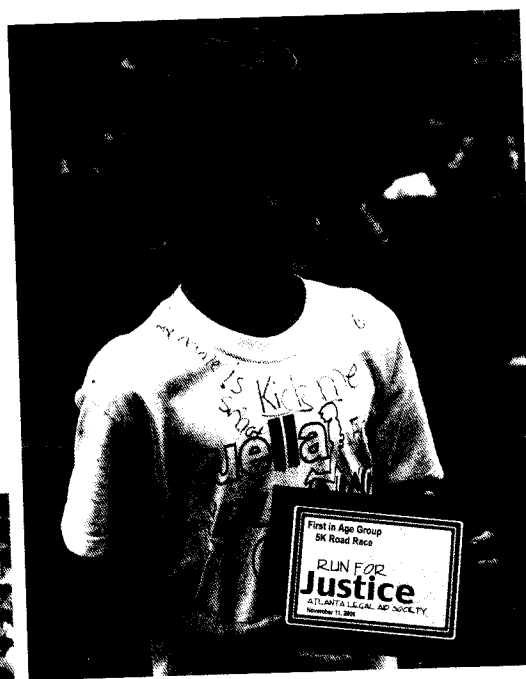
Atlanta
Legal Aid
Society

Year in Pictures

Our 15th annual Run for Justice attracted over 800 registrants and raised nearly \$20,000!

Sponsorship hit an all-time high this year, thanks to the hard work of our sponsorship committee:

Greg Rimes, *Holland & Knight*, Chair
Michael Stephens, *Alston & Bird LLP*
Sandra Mallory, *Smith, Gambrell & Russell*
Jo White, *Hunton & Williams LLP*
Lori Bearden, *Pursley Lowery Meeks LLP*



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Year in Pictures

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 Michael Stephens, *Alston & Bird LLP*
 Sandra Mallory, *Smith, Gambrell & P.*
 Jo White, *Hunton & Williams*
 Lori Bearden, *Pursley L.*

..... 581
 339
 \$97,184
 795

..... 1,147
 96
 \$1,205,973

..... 302
 \$2,031,023

Caseload Statistics

16

Consumer Finance	770
Bankruptcy/Debtor Relief	1,229
Collection (Repossession, Deficiency, Garnishment)	656
Contracts/Warranties	18
Credit Access	89
Public Utilities/Energy	27
Unfair Sales Practices	351
Insurance/Other Consumer Finance Issues	3,140
Total Consumer Finance	

Education	227
Education - General	25
Public School Discipline	12
Special Education - Handicap Discrimination	25
Other Education	289
Total Education	

Employment	54
Employment Discrimination Issues	
(Race, Gender, Handicap, Age)	155
Wage Claims	178
General Pensions/Other Employment Issues	387
Total Employment	

<i>Family Law</i>	
Adoptions	182
Custody/Visitations/Modifications/Contempt/Habeas Corpus	1,919
Divorce/Separations/Annulment	3,781
Guardianship/Conservatorship	216
Name Change	186
Parental Rights Termination	27
Paternity	31
Domestic Abuse	455
Support	1,120
Legitimations/Birth Certificates/Other Family	622
Other Family	71
Total Family	8,610
 <i>Juvenile</i>	
Delinquent	4
Neglected/Abused/Dependent	32
Other Juvenile	9
Total Juvenile	45
 <i>Health</i>	
Medicaid	903
Eligibility/Termination	10
Nursing Home/Medicaid/Spousal Impoverishment	48
CCSP/QMB/SLMB	17
Medicare	81
Other Health	142
Nursing Home Issues	49
Medical Bills/Medical Care	30
Total Health	1,280
 <i>Housing</i>	
General Public Housing Issues	561
General Homeowner/Real Property Issues	794
Foreclosures	22
Private Landlord/Tenant	2,551
Section 8 and Subsidized Multi-Family Issues	900
Other Housing Issues	264
Total Housing	5,092
 <i>Income Maintenance</i>	
General TANF/CSRU/Other Welfare Issues	121
Black Lung	1
Food Stamps/Commodities	388
Social Security Issues	804
Unemployment Compensation	425
Veteran's Benefits	20
Worker's Compensation	9
General Services/Income Maintenance Issues	104
Total Income Maintenance	1,872

Individual Rights

Immigration/Naturalization	20
General Mental Health Issues	66
Guardianships	9
Partner Rights	2
Disability Rights	34
Financial Exploitation	13
Other Individual Rights	243
Total Individual Rights	387

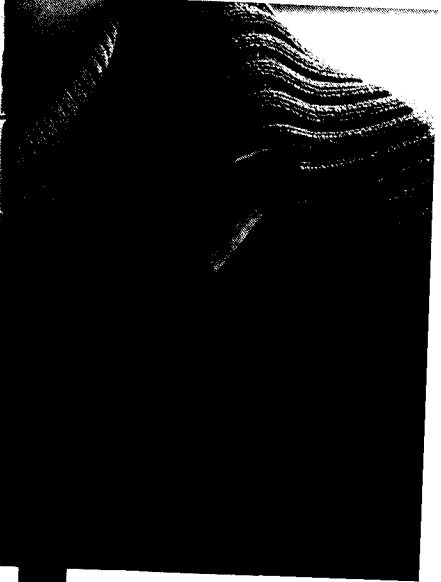
Miscellaneous

Incorporation Dissolution	4
Indian/Tribal Law	1
Licenses (Auto & Other)	20
Torts	183
Advanced Directives, Wills and Estates	946
Powers of Attorney	12
Property Titles	3
Other Estate/Probate	43
Other Miscellaneous	857
Total Miscellaneous	2,069
Total Cases	23,171

Operation Unit Statistics

AIDS Legal Project	382
Cancer Legal Project	174
Clayton County Pro Bono Project	456
Cobb County Office	3,510
DeKalb County Office	5,004
DeKalb Family Law Information Center	691
Downtown Domestic Relations	1,116
Downtown General Law Unit	1,674
Fulton County Pro Se Clinic	943
Georgia Senior Legal Hotline	3,822
Grandparent/Relative Caregiver Project	165
Gwinnett Family Law Information Center	472
Gwinnett County Office	2,450
Health Law Partnership (HeLP)	287
Senior Citizens Law Project	426
South Fulton/Clayton County Office	1,599
Total Cases	23,171
Ombudsman Program Investigations	1,132
Grand Total	24,303

AIDS Legal Project/Cancer and ALS Legal Initiative/Breast Cancer Legal Project



Founded in 1989, the AIDS Legal Project offers essential legal services to persons living with HIV/AIDS. In 2006, it represented 382 clients. As the only service organization that exclusively addresses the legal needs of the Atlanta HIV/AIDS community, the project receives support from the City of Atlanta under a HOPWA (Housing Opportunities for People With AIDS) grant from HUD, from Fulton County under a Ryan White CARE (Comprehensive AIDS Resources Emergency) Act grant from HRSA, and from the Atlanta AIDS Partnership Fund through a grant administered by the United Way of Metropolitan Atlanta and The Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta.

The Cancer and ALS (Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis, or Lou Gehrig's Disease) Legal Initiative and the Breast Cancer Legal Project served 174 clients. The end of 2006 marked the first anniversary of our Breast Cancer Legal Project, a two-year Equal Justice Works fellowship funded by Ford & Harrison and staffed by Haley A. Schwartz.

Typical cases involve access to income, health care, housing and issues of self-empowerment, including preparation of wills, advance directives and family issues. The Projects and Initiative also help clients protect their rights as defined under the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Fair Housing Act, and other statutes.

In addition to individual casework, the Projects and Initiative have provided thousands of people with free information, legal advice, and community education concerning the legal rights of persons living with HIV/AIDS, cancer, and ALS at health fairs, client and volunteer training sessions, and professional education seminars.

Our clients frequently face health insurance problems. For example, Richard resigned from his job because his HIV prevented him from working, and he elected to continue his group health coverage under COBRA. COBRA is a federal law that provides certain former employees the right to temporary continuation of health coverage at the former employee's expense. After more than one year of COBRA coverage, the insurance company notified Richard that his health insurance was cancelled retroactively because his most recent premium payment was approximately \$14 less than the amount due. We wrote a letter to the insurance company in which we demanded the immediate reinstatement of Richard's health insurance because COBRA coverage may not be terminated automatically if the payment is not significantly less than the premium amount (the \$14 deficiency was only 3% of the premium amount) and because the company failed to provide a 30-day grace period to pay the deficiency as required under COBRA. The insurance company refused to reinstate the insurance so we contacted the Georgia Department of Labor (DOL) and asked the DOL to intervene. The DOL convinced Richard's former employer to instruct the insurance company to reinstate Richard's coverage, and now he enjoys full health care benefits.

Sometimes, however, we simply provide our clients with peace of mind, as seen in the case of a single mother named Joyce. The social worker from the cancer clinic where Joyce received care called us because Joyce wanted to prepare end of life documents, including a will and guardianship of her daughter. We visited Joyce at hospice the next day and prepared the documents she wanted. Joyce passed away a few hours after our visit knowing that she had made plans for her daughter's future.

Family Law

Atlanta Legal Aid helps clients with family law problems in all five of our counties. For many years now, about one-third of the cases handled by Legal Aid staff members have been family law matters. In four of our counties, the lawyers handle a mixed caseload of family law and other case types. For our Fulton County clients, we have a special unit that handles exclusively family law cases. In all five counties, our direct representation for family law clients focuses on stopping family violence and on providing stability and financial support for children and disabled or elderly adults. Nearly 8,610 family law cases were closed in 2006.

In addition to our direct representation, in several of our counties, Legal Aid staff helps unrepresented litigants to present their cases properly in court, through forms and advice at Family Law Information Centers (FLICs). Through these centers and their web sites, thousands of people obtain forms drafted by Legal Aid lawyers for use in divorces, legitimations, and other family law cases. In 2006, lawyers also provided consultations to nearly 2,000 people at these self-help centers.

Georgia's new child support guidelines took effect at the end of 2006. Legal Aid staff worked with members of the private bar and state government to draft the forms now being used across the state to calculate child support under the new guidelines. In addition, our staff helped provide training on the new guidelines for lawyers, judges, family violence advocates and mediators.

Donna and her former husband, Carl, divorced many years ago when their son was only two years old. Under their divorce agreement, the child was to live about half the time with each parent, and neither parent was ordered to pay child support to the other. Within a year or so, the boy was living with Donna, and only visiting with Carl on some weekends and part of the summer. Yet, Carl did not provide financial support to Donna for the child.

This situation continued for over a decade, with Donna caring for the parties' son without financial support from Carl. Finally, as the boy entered his teen years and began growing by leaps and bounds, Donna could no longer make ends meet without child support. However, the Office of Child Support Enforcement could not help her, because the parties' divorce decree did not give her primary physical custody.

That's when Donna came to Atlanta Legal Aid. A Legal Aid lawyer got the case filed in court, and the parties attended mediation. With the help of the mediator and the lawyers, the parties reached an agreement. Donna was awarded primary physical custody of the child, Carl was awarded regular visitation, child support was ordered, and an income deduction order was entered to have the child support payments taken directly out of Carl's pay.



Georgia Senior Legal Hotline



The Georgia Senior Legal Hotline, a statewide service of Atlanta Legal Aid Society, is a cooperative effort among Legal Aid, the Georgia Division of Aging Services, Georgia Legal Services Program, the State Bar *Pro Bono* Project, and the Atlanta Bar Association. The Hotline accepts calls from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., Monday through Friday, and provides seniors over the age of 60 with legal advice, brief services, self-help materials, and referrals to other sources of help. Although the program provides information and referral services to *all* older Georgians, it targets senior citizens who are economically needy, frail or at risk. A secondary purpose of the Hotline is to support existing legal projects serving Georgia's elderly through client referral. This is done with cases where a client needs more in-depth assistance than can be provided by the Hotline staff. In addition, the Hotline receives additional funding to offer legal advice and referrals to grandparents and relative caregivers of any age who are raising minor children in Georgia.

In 2006, the Hotline handled 3,822 cases and fielded 14,531 calls. Hotline staff includes one full-time managing attorney, eight part-time attorneys, and volunteer lawyers and law students. The Hotline uses technological advances in computer software and telephone capabilities to provide quick access to legal advice and information and to increase access to lawyers throughout the state. It offers quality legal services at no cost to an under-served segment of the population and provides a sound alternative for meeting the needs of older individuals who find it difficult to access legal assistance.

Mr. Smith financed a car in 2001 through his credit union. As part of the transaction, he agreed to purchase an extended service warranty for \$1,352. He was given a certificate that guaranteed him a full refund if he did not use the extended warranty in the next 5 years. The warranty expired on June 18, 2006, and because Mr. Smith had never used the warranty, he went to his credit union to collect his refund. The credit union claimed they were not responsible for the refund. They only serviced the warranties for a car company and they gave him the car company's name. Mr. Smith tried to locate the car company and found that they were no longer in business. He contacted the Hotline for assistance. A Hotline attorney reviewed the loan documents and the warranty documents, tracked down the registered agent for the car company, and wrote a letter demanding a full refund for Mr. Smith. Three weeks later, Mr. Smith received a check in the amount of \$1,352 for his full warranty refund.

...without financial support
...by leaps and bounds. D-
A Legal Aid lawyer
...did not give her primary pl-

General Law

The core of Atlanta Legal Aid Society's representation comes through the General Law practice. General Law offers advice and representation in employment cases, landlord-tenant disputes and public benefits. General Law also helps with a wide variety of consumer and public education issues.

Each office has a General Law practice, which covers the most basic needs of our clients yet can also offer advice and assistance in complex issues. General Law clients are typically the lowest-income individuals who seek help from Atlanta Legal Aid, and therefore, are often the most vulnerable.

The goal of most General Law cases is simply the preservation of the rights of the client under existing law.



Karol had over 30 years of experience as a daycare provider, the most recent six years at a local facility. One day after arriving at work, she opened the door to find a policeman. The head of the daycare rushed up and said, "She's the one. She's the one who tried to poison me. She put ice on a dishrag, and it made me sick." A shocked Karol denied the allegation, but her boss would not relent. Finally, with the police still standing there, Karol said to the boss, "If you are going to fire me, go ahead." The owner answered, "I am not going to fire you; you are going to quit." Karol refused, and after several minutes, the policeman convinced the owner to fill out separation paperwork and give it to Karol.

Only after filing for unemployment did Karol discover that the separation paperwork stated she had quit her job. For that reason, she was denied benefits. She appealed, and we represented her at the hearing. The hearing officer determined that Karol had not quit but had been fired for no fault of her own. As a result, Karol received the unemployment benefits to which she was entitled.

Grandparent/Relative Caregiver Project

The Grandparent/Relative Caregiver Project was created in 1997 in response to the growing number of grandparents and other relatives who are raising children in the place of absent or deceased parents. Relative caregivers, many of whom are retired and living on fixed incomes, often struggle to care and provide for the new members of the household. The project has two primary goals for its direct work with clients: the first is to stabilize the legal relationship between the relative and the child through an adoption or custody proceeding; the second is to maximize the financial and medical resources available to assist the relative in caring for the child.



The project's two attorneys provide direct representation to clients. In addition, they recruit, train, coordinate, and serve as backup to volunteer attorneys who provide additional client representation. In 2006 the project trained almost 50 attorneys to provide *pro bono* adoption services. In fact, since 1997, 325 metro Atlanta attorneys from over 125 firms and organizations have been trained by the project. The law firm Kilpatrick Stockton has made the project one of its flagship *pro bono* projects.

The project once again received a grant from the Georgia Department of Human Resources Division of Aging Services to increase the services provided to clients. Through support from this grant and the dedication of staff and volunteers, the project continued to provide holistic legal services for its adoption and custody clients. Sixty-three adoptions for 40 families were finalized in 2006, and we assisted many clients with obtaining adoption assistance benefits, which include Medicaid for the children.

Ms. Michel emigrated from Haiti at the age of 14 leaving her sister Sophie, an infant at the time, behind. Over the following seven years, their father died of malaria and their mother died of AIDS. Sophie became an orphan, shuffled among distant relatives in a country plagued by intense fighting.

Through determination and persistence, Ms. Michel arranged for Sophie to immigrate to the United States and be given a chance at a new life. Ms. Michel had been rearing her sister for just over two years when she approached the Grandparent/Relative Caregiver Project about adopting Sophie. Through the adoption, Ms. Michel was able to provide her sister with the stability she had been lacking in Haiti and with the opportunity for Sophie to become a U.S. citizen.

Health Law Partnership (HeLP)

The Health Law Partnership is an interdisciplinary community collaboration among Atlanta Legal Aid, Children's Healthcare of Atlanta and Georgia State University College of Law. HeLP's premise is that by combining the health care expertise of hospital professionals with the legal expertise of attorneys, we can provide a more holistic set of services to address the multiple determinants of children's health. The social and economic conditions in which children live can seriously affect their medical health. Attorneys intervene to address issues such as poor housing conditions, lack of protection from domestic violence, and failure to protect the legal rights of disabled children. The partnership's goal is to improve the health of children by improving the physical, social or economic environments in which many of them live.

An exciting part of HeLP is its interdisciplinary educational program that addresses legal, ethical, and policy issues that affect children's health. This includes in-service education for health care professionals at Children's as well as extern/clinic educational opportunities for students enrolled in professional graduate programs in law, medicine, nursing, social work and public health. During 2006, HeLP had law student externs from both Georgia State University and Emory University.

During its second full year of operations, HeLP received calls and opened cases concerning all aspects of family law, (including legitimation, child support, custody and divorce), education, Medicaid, disability issues and problems related to utilities. The attorneys also assisted with problems related to housing, employment, health insurance, and public benefits. HeLP staff attorneys handled many of these issues directly. Numerous volunteer attorneys assisted us by handling other cases on a *pro bono* basis.

HeLP has on-site legal offices at Children's at Scottish Rite and Children's at Egleston. A third office, the HeLP Legal Services Clinic at Georgia State University College of Law, is scheduled to open in January 2007.

Jamie came to us for assistance in dealing with her housing authority. Her son, Mikey, had been diagnosed with a brain tumor and is confined to a wheelchair. While he was still in the hospital, Jamie contacted her public housing authority to ask them to install a ramp so that her son would be able to get in and out of the apartment. A month later, the housing authority said that it lacked funding and declined to build a ramp; it suggested that she contact her church to find a volunteer to build it.

Our staff attorney contacted the executive director of the housing authority to discuss the matter and some of the requirements of federal law. Within a week, the family had a ramp built by the housing authority.



Hispanic Outreach Law Project

The Hispanic Outreach Law Project advises, refers and represents Spanish-speaking clients in the five-county metropolitan area that Atlanta Legal Aid Society serves. A Spanish Hotline is available for clients to speak directly with a person four half-days a week and to leave messages in their native language; a Spanish-speaking attorney and paralegal then screen these clients. The project continues the development of strong collaborative relationships with agencies that serve the Hispanic community and with the Spanish-speaking private attorneys who take cases on a *pro bono* basis. The project staff now speaks frequently on Spanish-language radio station programs.

Two-and-a-half attorneys and three paralegals now staff the project. Spanish-speaking residents in Cobb, South Fulton, Clayton, and Gwinnett counties have an alternative option to calling the Spanish Hotline – they can call the office in their area directly and speak to a Spanish-speaking attorney or paralegal. Legal issues of particular interest to the project are access to the court system for domestic violence victims, access to public benefits for the Latino/Hispanic community, housing conditions, employment problems, educational services, and consumer issues, including fraud in home purchases and predatory lending.



Ms. Perez, an El Salvadoran born resident, is the mother of six children, ages 17, 15, 12, 10, 7 and 5. In addition to caring for her home and children, Ms. Perez works a full-time job as a domestic worker. Ms. Perez was married to the father of her six children for more than fifteen years. Although he physically abused her, Ms. Perez persevered through the abuse in an effort to provide for her children.

The final straw came when Ms. Perez discovered that her husband was sexually molesting the female children. Ms. Perez speaks very little English and she was apprehensive about going to legal authorities. However, knowing she had to do something to protect her children, she fled from Georgia and took them to New York.

Ms. Perez lived several weeks in New York, but it was very difficult for her to make a living there. Moreover, her husband reported to the Georgia child protection agency that she abducted the children. The Georgia agency contacted the child protective services agency in New York to have it investigate Ms. Perez and the children. During the

course of the investigation, the New York agency learned of the sexual molestation. It referred Ms. Perez for assistance to the appropriate state agency when she decided to move back to Georgia. As a result, Ms. Perez applied for and was granted a protective order by the Gwinnett County Superior Court on behalf of her and the children.

Subsequently, in an effort to obtain a divorce, Ms. Perez visited the Latin American Association (LAA), a non-profit Hispanic community agency. LAA referred Ms. Perez to the Project for assistance with the divorce. Project attorneys handled Ms. Perez's divorce, which granted her custody, denied visitation to the abusive father, and doubled the amount of child support. The father is now facing criminal charges relating to his sexual molestation of the female children.

Home Defense Program

The Home Defense Program (HDP) provides referrals and legal representation to low- and moderate-income homeowners and homebuyers victimized by home equity and home purchase scams. In 2006, HDP negotiated and obtained very favorable settlements that saved clients' homes through cancellations of mortgage loans; restructuring of mortgage loans which included substantially lower balances, interest rates, and monthly payments; and agreements for short payoffs of mortgage loans with reverse mortgages for senior homeowners.

On July 11, 2006, HDP attorneys Karen Brown and Bill Brennan participated in a public hearing held in Atlanta by the Federal Reserve Board regarding predatory mortgage lending practices and the effectiveness of the Homeownership and Equity Protection Act (HOEPA) in combating these practices. As a panelist, Bill testified that HOEPA and the GA Fair Lending Act were ineffective in preventing predatory lending practices. Bill also testified about the increase in loans made without regard to repayment ability. At the open mike session, Karen presented a senior client who had been failed by laws intended to protect borrowers from companies that saddle individuals with unaffordable mortgage loans.



Senior citizen and long-time homeowner Mrs. McDougal was solicited by a home improvement contractor who offered to perform what she felt were needed repairs on her home. The contractor offered to arrange a high-cost adjustable rate \$87,500 mortgage loan which paid off her existing mortgage, funded the repairs (\$15,600) and required fixed payments of \$657 per month for the first two years, with increased payments thereafter. Mrs. McDougal agreed to such a contract. Without her knowledge or consent, the loan application falsely stated her income as \$1,933 per month when, in fact, it totaled \$1,300 from Social Security income, an adoption assistance benefit for her daughter who lives with her, and part-time employment.

Mrs. McDougal contacted Atlanta Legal Aid when she eventually faced foreclosure. The mortgage company agreed to postpone the foreclosure to allow HDP time to investigate and resolve the case, if possible. An independent inspector determined that Mrs. McDougal had been overcharged for the home improvement work by \$11,200. According to public records, the contractor had been convicted of felonious theft by taking in connection with home improvement scams targeted against other senior citizen homeowners. Home Defense Program director Bill Brennan raised legal claims against the mortgage company for its participation in the home improvement scheme and for making a mortgage loan without regard to repayment ability.

After extensive negotiations, the mortgage company finally agreed to accept a short payoff from a reverse mortgage loan. The short payoff saved Mrs. McDougal \$26,880. Some of the proceeds from the reverse mortgage were used to repair her home. She has no mortgage payments under the new loan. Her only obligation is to maintain the home and pay her property taxes and homeowners insurance premiums.

Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program

The Long-term Care Ombudsman Program's mission is to protect the welfare of the elderly, the physically and developmentally disabled, and the mentally ill who reside in long-term care facilities. The program monitors more than 800 licensed and unlicensed personal care homes and 80 nursing homes in a 10-county region for signs of abuse or neglect of residents. Monitoring is conducted through unannounced site visits and by responding to complaints about these facilities filed by concerned staff, family and residents. The program employs 11 full-time staff and 43 volunteers. The Senior Citizens Law Project staff provides legal support and advice.

Unannounced site visits are the foundation of the ombudsman's work. The staff made 3,279 such visits in 2006. The ombudsmen verify that facilities provide safe, healthy and abuse-free environments for the residents. They also form relationships with the residents and their families, the facility staff, and local law enforcement, whose help is often needed to address serious abuse issues. The ombudsmen performed 58 trainings and 59 community education sessions in 2006. Topics included ways to recognize and report signs of abuse and neglect of residents of nursing homes and personal care homes. Program staff also handled 1,132 abuse or neglect complaints from residents, staff and others in the community.



On a routine visit to a nursing home, an ombudsman met Mary, a resident who wanted to leave the facility and return to her apartment. Mary had suffered from a stroke and came to the facility for rehab, after which she still walked with a cane but was otherwise independent. Mary's daughter was very much against her leaving the facility. The daughter had allowed her mother's lease to expire and placed all of her furniture and belongings into storage. The social worker at the nursing home sided with the daughter. The ombudsman helped Mary obtain information on how to contact social services organizations and apartment complexes nearby since she had no means of transportation. During the next several weeks, the resident called the ombudsman numerous times to ask for advice on how to navigate the system and apply for services. Shortly after, the ombudsman received a call from the resident, who said she was thriving in her new apartment. She thanked the ombudsman profusely for helping her gain her freedom.

Mental Health and Disability Rights Project

The Mental Health and Disability Rights Project has been providing advocacy to persons in state psychiatric facilities in the metro Atlanta area for over 20 years. Over the years we have expanded our services to those persons confined in nursing homes. Our target population now includes not only those institutionalized but those who have been able to access community based services, and whose rights have been violated either through receipt of inadequate care or refusal of necessary services. Our focus has always been to enforce the rights of persons with disabilities under the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Supreme Court case that originated in our project, *Olmstead v. L.C. & E.W.*

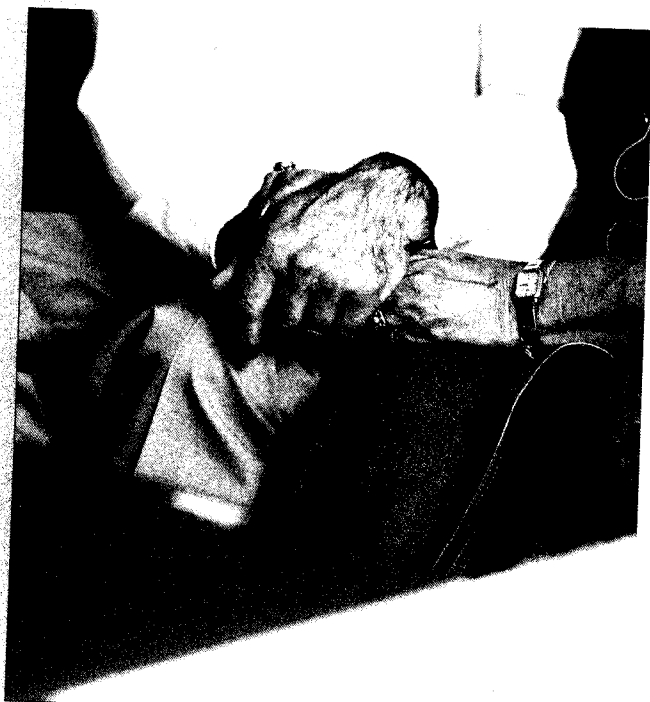
We continue to advocate for children to receive Medicaid services, including therapeutic foster care. We also recently filed a case in the Superior Court of Fulton County on behalf of several individuals who were being denied mental health services, including medication, because they were unable to pay for the services. This has been an issue for many years. Our case, we hope, will result in a comprehensive policy by the state to require community-based providers to provide these services, which, under state law, cannot be denied because of an individual's inability to pay. In addition, this year saw success in a precedent-setting link between state hospital staff and the Independent Care Waiver Program, which serves individuals with traumatic brain injury. We reached settlement agreements with the state involving three clients who were institutionalized in a state hospital for the mentally ill and denied services. Two clients are currently receiving services in the community in a supportive home environment and the third will soon begin his transition visits to his new community placement. The latter case coordinated a holistic group of mental health providers, personal support providers, family and state hospital treatment staff.

Our paralegal staff has been expanded to include Kathryn Wierwille, who works on a special project surveying nursing home residents regarding community placement. Her paralegal fellowship is generously supported by one of our community partners, Sutherland Asbill & Brennan. In addition, for the past two years, our project has been a field placement site for the Georgia State University School of Social Work. This program offers our staff the opportunity to work with a BSW student for nine months and has proven to be very successful. We are currently lucky enough to have a MSW, Janna Baker, who has been able to expand our ability to do transition planning and follow-up for our clients and to design training for hospital social work staff.

Lastly, our work under contract with Georgia's Protection and Advocacy System, the Georgia Advocacy Office, continues with advocates at hospitals in Atlanta, Savannah, Milledgeville, and Rome. Our attorneys provide consulting services and training for these advocates in human rights, community placement and other areas affecting persons with disabilities.



Senior Citizens Law Project



The Senior Citizens Law Project (SCLP) provides legal representation to people 60 years of age and older. Although the project accepts clients regardless of their income, it gives highest priority to legal problems affecting low-income and homebound seniors. These problems often involve income and health care benefits, such as Social Security, Supplemental Security Income, Medicaid and Medicare. SCLP also represents those who live in nursing homes and personal care homes, regardless of their age, on issues involving admission and discharge rights, as well as conditions of care in those facilities. Cases involving abuse, neglect, or financial exploitation of seniors are also given high priority. With the on-going rise in the cost of medical care for the elderly, and given the fact that senior citizens are the fastest-growing population group in the United States, the Senior Citizens Law Project continues to have a growing caseload. In 2006, SCLP served 426 clients.

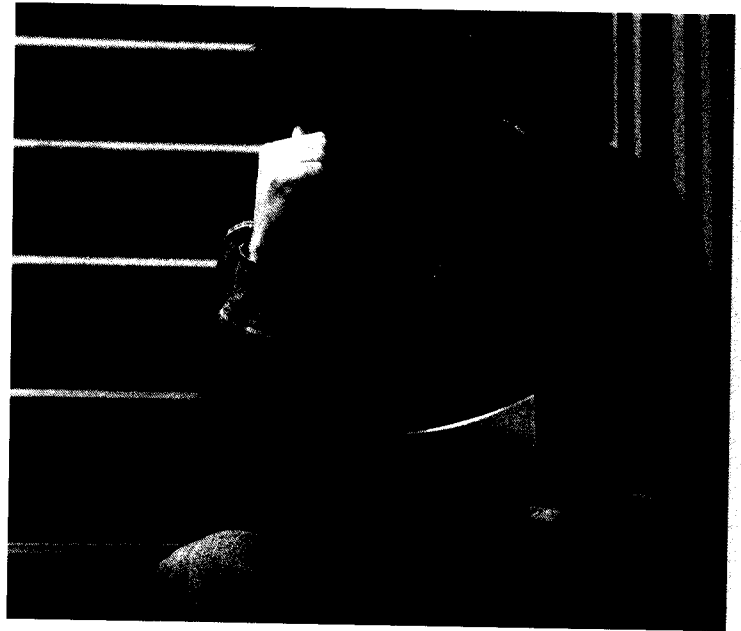
In 2006, the Senior Citizens Law Project (SCLP) represented six low-income seniors who had received shoddy repair work on their homes through property rehabilitation loans granted by the City of Atlanta. Contractors hired by the city were paid for repairs that were usually substandard or, in many cases, nonexistent. The Bureau of Housing of the City of Atlanta receives federal funds from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to repair the homes of low-income senior and disabled homeowners. The funds are earmarked to correct any housing code violations and ensure this vulnerable population has decent housing. Each client's home was secured for up to ten years for the repair contract price. Lawsuits were filed on behalf of these seniors because the city poorly managed federal money allocated to improve the housing conditions of elderly and disabled members of the community.

The six clients endured poor living conditions. One senior, caring for her disabled husband, used her loan money to install a wheelchair ramp. The city's contractor installed a defective ramp, and the client had to call the fire department to help whenever her husband needed to leave the home. The city was notified as early as 2001 about these substandard repairs, but the complaints were repeatedly ignored.

After SCLP filed suit on behalf of the seniors, the City of Atlanta settled the clients' claims for a total of nearly \$90,000. The suits also brought a great deal of media attention to the problems of the city rehab program. This exposure led to the Bureau of Housing suspending administration of the program until further notice. The city is in the process of making drastic changes to the program, including staff and policy changes.

TeamChild Atlanta

TeamChild Atlanta is dedicated to helping Atlanta's at-risk youth stay in school and out of jail. Working within the educational system, the juvenile justice system, and the public and health benefits system, TeamChild Atlanta has developed an extensive network of service providers that will identify the unmet needs of children and then work with us towards fulfilling those needs. Over the past year, TeamChild has continued to collaborate with two Atlanta law firms, Alston & Bird LLP and Nelson Mullins Riley & Scarborough LLP, to increase the number of attorneys available to serve this under-represented community. In addition, TeamChild has reported several successful outcomes for its clients – including one settlement that resulted in over \$150,000 in educational services provided to the student.



In 2007, TeamChild expects to increase the number of clients served both by volunteers from the private bar and through trained Atlanta Legal Aid Society lawyers. TeamChild remains dedicated to ensuring that Atlanta's at-risk youth are provided every opportunity to experience success.

TeamChild Atlanta recently secured a settlement that will provide David, a public high school student who had never learned to read, almost \$150,000 in educational benefits. David, whose learning disabilities went unnoticed and undiagnosed for 10 years, will receive three years of intensive, individual tutoring that will increase his literacy level and possibly offer him an opportunity to attend college. The school system also promised to pay for two years of vocational school if David should choose to attend.

For David, a two-sport star at a local high school, the goal had been to play college sports. Academics were the major obstacle. Now, with access to three hours of tutoring per day, David hopes to match his prowess on the field with exceptional performance in the classroom. He will receive his instruction from a tutor trained to teach him in a way that will accommodate his learning disability. David will obtain literacy skills in the next year and graduate, prepared to move into life after high school.

Collaborative Technology Projects

Atlanta Legal Aid Society and Georgia Legal Services Program have been engaged in a project to maintain two statewide web sites to provide easy access to legal information for the public and to provide quick access to *pro bono* resources for volunteer lawyers across the state.

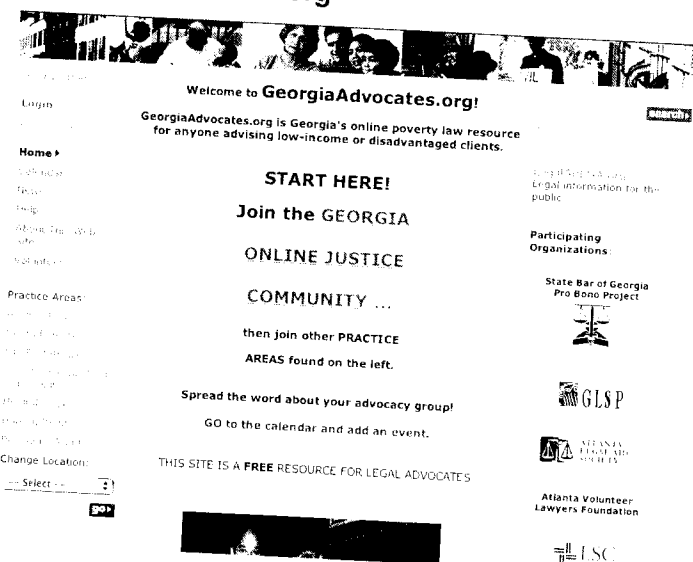
LegalAid-GA.org

LegalAid-GA.org is the statewide public access legal web site, providing over 1,000 resources to help Georgians understand their rights. The site offers:

- information on rights and legal responsibilities in 18 different areas of the law;
- access to court forms and documents;
- referrals to lawyers who will provide free and low-cost legal help throughout the state; and
- lists of the courts in each county.

In 2006, the LegalAid-GA.org web site had over 200,000 unique visitors who spent nearly 24,000 hours on the site.

GeorgiaAdvocates.org



GeorgiaAdvocates.org

In January 2004, Atlanta Legal Aid Society and Georgia Legal Services Program launched GeorgiaAdvocates.org, a password-protected web site for legal aid attorneys and private attorney volunteers, which provides the following resources:

- a law library of legal training materials, basic pleadings and court forms for use in *pro bono* cases and other client advocacy;
- a news forum with poverty law news;
- a calendar of events with information about continuing education opportunities, fundraisers and other events;
- a listing of new volunteer opportunities for attorneys seeking *pro bono* work; and
- group listservs to enhance communication among legal task forces and volunteer attorneys.

Since the initial launch, nearly 1,000 attorneys have joined the site.

Volunteer Attorneys

Each year Atlanta Legal Aid Society works closely with many volunteer attorneys who handle cases for low-income clients. With only *one* Legal Aid attorney for every 7,000 income-eligible clients in the five-county service area, these volunteers provide free legal services to many who would otherwise be turned away.

Several of our specialty projects have developed their own panels of volunteer lawyers. These are bar members with particular expertise or interest in the work of the project. The AIDS Legal Project, the Grandparent/Relative Caregiver Project, TeamChild Atlanta, the Home Defense Program, the Georgia Senior Legal Hotline and the Mental Health and Disability Rights Project each has its own regular volunteers. Atlanta Legal Aid staff recruit and train these volunteers and provide continuing support for them.

Legal Aid has developed formal ties with the bar in each of the five counties it serves. Volunteer attorneys extend free legal services to those in need, whose cases Atlanta Legal Aid cannot handle.

- The Atlanta Volunteer Lawyers Foundation (AVLF) is an independent agency that provides services to thousands of low-income clients in Atlanta and Fulton County. AVLF can place with volunteers certain types of cases that Atlanta Legal Aid cannot handle because of lack of resources. AVLF arranges for volunteer lawyers to interview clients at the downtown office of Atlanta Legal Aid every Saturday morning. Each volunteer takes several cases, which have been pre-screened by Atlanta Legal Aid or AVLF staff. Atlanta Legal Aid staff attorneys serve as mentors and on-going contacts for the volunteers. Approximately 200 attorneys participate in this program.
- The DeKalb Volunteer Lawyers Foundation (DVLf) is also an independent agency, serving low-income clients whom Atlanta Legal Aid cannot serve in DeKalb County. DVLf accepts referrals of clients with domestic relations cases, as well as a variety of other civil law problems. The staffs of the two programs work together to provide complementary services.
- The Cobb County Bar Association asks each of its members to volunteer or to contribute financially to support legal services to the poor. As a consequence, more than 100 Cobb lawyers volunteer to take at least one case per year from Atlanta Legal Aid's Cobb office. Our Cobb County *pro bono* coordinator places appropriate cases with volunteers, monitoring how many cases each volunteer takes and how much time is spent on each one. Our legal staff screen the cases carefully before referral and then provide on-going support to each volunteer while the case is in progress.
- Our Clayton County *pro bono* coordinator works out of the Southside office and in a small office in Forest Park. She maintains regular contact with Clayton County judges and bar leaders to protect and support Atlanta Legal Aid's work. Our staff screens about 450 applications a year for this *pro bono* project. In 2006, the project placed 79 clients with 62 volunteer attorneys, and staff helped an additional 378 clients with referrals and other services.
- The Gwinnett County Bar Association supports volunteer efforts. Members of the bar now volunteer to accept individual cases screened by our staff. The office also enjoys a regular volunteer, who works in the office one day a week, doing legal research and other work as needed.



Fellowship Program

The Fellowship Program for Atlanta Associates

The Fellowship Program began in 1995 when Alston & Bird committed an associate to work at Atlanta Legal Aid for four months. Since then, 13 Atlanta law firms have sent associates to Atlanta Legal Aid for periods of four to six months. Under the program, firms sponsor associates to work at one of Atlanta Legal Aid's five offices. These associates continue to receive their salary and benefits from their firm and maintain office and library privileges there.

An outstanding collaboration between the private bar and public-interest practice, the program immerses the Fellows in a variety of cases and crises, giving them valuable opportunities for court time and for responsibilities that only come much later at a large firm. Sponsoring law firms have learned that the Fellowship Program is one form of *pro bono* service that rewards them, as well as the recipient, in many ways.

Fellows in 2006



Marshawn Evans
Randolph W. Thrower Fellow
Sutherland Asbill & Brennan, LLP
Downtown Office



Natalie Whiteman
Alston & Bird
Downtown Office

Pro Bono Partnership

Kilpatrick Stockton and BellSouth Corporation *Grandparent/Relative Caregiver Project*

The pro bono partnership of Atlanta Legal Aid with Kilpatrick Stockton and BellSouth Corporation handles adoptions for the Grandparent/Relative Caregiver Project. These volunteers, as well as volunteers from other firms, expand the capacity of Atlanta Legal Aid's staff and enable many more grandparents and other caregiving relatives to provide stable, loving homes for children whose parents cannot care for them. Since its inception, project volunteers have assisted around 240 families in adopting more than 450 children and obtaining in excess of \$1 million in adoption assistance benefits. In 2003, Kilpatrick Stockton co-counseled with Atlanta Legal Aid on filing a federal lawsuit, *Harris v. Martin*, to ensure the provision of adoption assistance benefits to relative caregivers. In a decision of nationwide importance, the federal court for the Northern District of Georgia ruled that the government regulation that prevented our clients from receiving adoption assistance because their grandchildren had not been taken into state custody was in violation of federal law.

Sutherland Asbill & Brennan, LLP *Mental Health and Disability Rights Project*

Attorneys at Sutherland Asbill & Brennan have a long history of collaborating with Legal Aid in support of disability rights. In 2006, the firm began to support a paralegal position at Legal Aid to investigate the cases of disabled persons in nursing homes who could live outside of the home, if proper community health care services were provided by the State. That position is now filled by Kathryn Wierville, who comes to Legal Aid with significant experience with children needing special education services. The firm has committed its attorneys to represent cases for these clients using the authority of Legal Aid's U.S. Supreme Court victory in *Olmstead v. E.W. and L.C.* Sutherland's support for the paralegal position is only its most recent collaboration with Legal Aid on behalf of clients with disability rights issues. Sutherland co-counseled with Legal Aid in the *Olmstead* litigation, and then supported a reverse fellowship for Legal Aid attorney Susan Walker Goico, which led to the filing of *Birdsong v. Perdue*, to implement *Olmstead* in nursing homes.

King & Spalding and Troutman Sanders *Eviction Defense Project*

The Eviction Defense Project is a partnership between Atlanta Legal Aid and King & Spalding and Troutman Sanders. Attorneys from the firms represent clients in eviction hearings in Fulton County Magistrate Court twice weekly. The project took its first case in July 2001; in 2006 it handled over 55 cases. Many of the tenants that these firms represented would otherwise not have had representation because of Atlanta Legal Aid's limited resources. Laurie Scott, director of Atlanta Legal Aid Society's Tenant Hotline, provides extensive preliminary training and continuing back-up assistance to the volunteers.

2006 Financial Data

INCOME

Legal Services Corporation	2,328,000
Private Bar Campaign	1,451,000
United Way	369,000
Atlanta Regional Commission	534,000
City of Atlanta Community Development/HUD	114,000
City of Atlanta/HOPWA/HUD	151,000
Cobb County	226,000
Clayton County	50,000
DeKalb County	101,000
Fulton County	40,000
Gwinnett County	78,000
Georgia Bar Foundation (IOLTA)	574,000
Equal Justice Works	37,000
HeLP	297,000
Home Defense	48,000
Ryan White	89,000
Other AIDS Grants	30,000
VOCA	85,000
Senior Legal Hotline	299,000
State Domestic Violence	491,000
Fulton Pro Se Clinic	86,000
DeKalb Pro Se Clinic	31,000
Foundations & Other Support	762,000
Interest Income	1,000
Endowment Contributions	2,000
TOTAL	\$8,274,000

EXPENSES

Personnel	7,045,000
Consulting	253,000
Travel	78,000
Space	375,000
Supplies	259,000
Equipment	90,000
Insurance	31,000
Training	42,000
Other (telephone, litigation, etc.)	129,000
TOTAL	\$8,302,000

Sources of Support

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Atlanta Legal Aid Society receives its funding from a wide range of sources. These donors, who make our work possible, illustrate the broad base of support that we enjoy from public and private sources in the Atlanta area and nationwide.

- The federal Legal Services Corporation (LSC), our largest funding source, provided about one-third of last year's income;
- The Atlanta Regional Commission supported services to senior citizens through the Senior Citizens Law Project and the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program. Fulton County also supported work for seniors in Fulton;
- The State of Georgia funded the Georgia Senior Legal Hotline and supported our Grandparent/Relative Caregiver Project;
- The City of Atlanta and DeKalb and Fulton counties supported housing work with Community Block Grant funds;
- The Criminal Justice Coordinating Council funded ombudsman work through the Victim of Crimes Act (VOCA);
- Clayton, Cobb and Gwinnett counties supported legal work in those counties while DeKalb and Fulton counties continued to fund the family law *pro se* clinics we operate in DeKalb and Fulton county courthouses;
- HOPWA and Ryan White Care Act funded work with individuals living with HIV;
- The Georgia Bar Foundation (IOLTA) provided support through funding of attorney salaries;
- The United Way provided funds for programs to ensure housing stability; and
- The State of Georgia funded work for protection of victims of domestic violence.

Private foundations supported our work through specialized projects targeting vulnerable populations. Both the Lettie Pate Evans Foundation and the Charles M. and Mary D. Grant Foundation continued their multi-year support of the Health Law Partnership (HeLP), while the Atlanta Foundation and The Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta also provided generous support to this project. Trinity Presbyterian Church once again supported the Grandparent/Relative Caregiver Project, as did the Sartain Lanier Family Foundation through a multi-year grant.

The Osiason Educational Foundation made a charitable donation on behalf of the Breast Cancer Legal Project, and Primerica through Citigroup Foundation supported Gwinnett Legal Aid's work in representing clients with housing problems. The John and Mary Franklin Foundation and the John H. & Wilhelmina D. Harland Charitable Foundation continued to help fund TeamChild Atlanta. Through The Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta, Inc., the Shirley Bolton Fund continued to support the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program, and the Giving Mutt Family Fund provided support for Legal Aid's general program work in the five-county metropolitan area.

Major Donors

Going the Extra Mile: A Major Donor Campaign began near the end of 2004 and completed the first full year of its three-year cycle in 2005. Answering the challenge of two attorneys—an anonymous donor and Tom Watson Brown, Atlanta Legal Aid's longest-serving attorney board member—more than 100 attorneys went the extra mile and made commitments to give almost \$250,000 per year to support the salaries of the organization's exceptional staff.

The first stage of this year-round campaign offered a three-year program that allowed donors to commit to a significantly higher annual pledge and, with the help of the Challenge Fund in the first two years, to "step up" to the larger gift in the third year. *Going the Extra Mile* will be integrated into the Atlanta Legal Aid Annual Campaign during 2007, the year of the campaign's silver anniversary.

Donors may designate their gifts to support a particular area of Legal Aid's work: consumer issues, family law, senior citizens' issues, health law, or wherever it is most needed. Designation allows donors to receive further information throughout the year on the area that interests them most.

Atlanta Legal Aid staff members often "go the extra mile" in serving their clients. Donors have shown their willingness to "go the extra mile" themselves to make the staff's continued public service financially manageable. Members of the inaugural class of major donors to Atlanta Legal Aid Society are listed below.

Guardian of Justice

(\$10,000)

Roy and Marie Barnes

Phillip A. Bradley &
Cathy A. Harper

William H. Brewster

Sustainer of Justice

(\$5,000)

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John A. Chandler
Steve Clay
Paulette & Lawrence Fox
David H. Gambrell

Jonathan Golden
Philip E. & Melinda Holladay
Walter E. Jospin & Judge Wendy Shoob
John S. Pratt
Elizabeth V. Tanis

Advocate for Justice

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The 2006 Annual Campaign

The Atlanta legal community is known throughout the nation for its support of the Atlanta Legal Aid Society. In fact, Atlanta ranks third behind the much larger markets of Boston and Los Angeles in terms of dollars raised from the private bar. Teri McClure, general counsel for United Parcel Service, joined former Atlanta Legal Aid board president Terry Walsh of Alston & Bird LLP to lead the 24th Annual Campaign. The team brought home \$75,000 more than the \$1.3 million goal of the campaign.

A team of experienced vice-chairs and solicitors who called upon over 100 local firms ably assisted the pair in this endeavor. This team of dedicated volunteers ensured the continuation of what has become Atlanta Legal Aid's second largest funding source, comprising one-sixth of the total annual budget.

The Campaign Team

Cathy A. Benton, *Alston & Bird LLP*
Richard H. Deane, Jr., *Jones Day*
Robert N. Dokson, *Ellis Funk Goldberg Labovitz & Dokson*
J.D. Humphries, *Stites & Harbison PLLC*
Michael T. Nations, *Nations, Toman & McKnight LLP*
Michael Stephens, *Alston & Bird LLP*
William C. Thompson, *Weissman, Nowack, Curry & Wilco, PC*
Amy Levin Weil, *U.S. Attorney's Office*

Solicitors

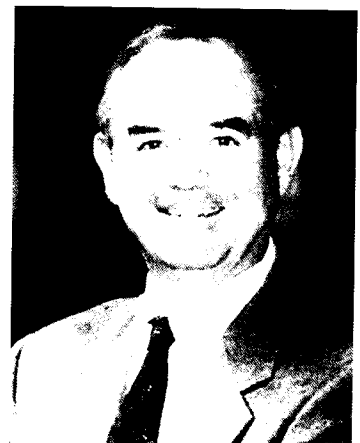
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Teri McClure
United Parcel Service
Co-Chair, 2006 Annual Campaign



Terry Walsh
Alston & Bird LLP
Co-Chair, 2006 Annual Campaign

Firms and Corporate Legal Departments

Pacesetter (\$300 per attorney)

Adorno & Yoss	King & Spalding
Alston & Bird LLP	Law Offices of Wayne Grant, P.C.
Law Offices of Paul H. Anderson	Long & Holder, LLP
Arnall Golden Gregory LLP	Mary A. Miller & Associates
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Baker, Donelson, Bearman, Caldwell & Berkowitz, PC	Morris, Manning & Martin, LLP
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The Barnes Law Group	Nelson Mullins Riley & Scarborough, LLP
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Kilpatrick Stockton LLP	

Honor Roll (\$150 per attorney)

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Cohen & Caproni	Kish & Lietz, P.C.
Delta Air Lines, Law Dept.	Mozley, Finlayson & Loggins
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Franzen and Salzano, PC	Thomas, Kennedy, Sampson & Patterson

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(Less than \$150 per attorney)

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Bogart & Bogart	Home Depot
Bowden Law Firm	IBM Corporation
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(\$2,500 or more)

Atlanta Bar Association's Litigation Section
Bowne of Atlanta
McMaster-Carr Supply Company

Patron

(\$1,000-\$2,499)

Atlanta Association of Legal Administrators
The Partners Group

Pacesetter

(\$500-\$999)

Atlanta Bar Association's Alternative Dispute Resolution Section
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(up to \$499)

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